

## **LSB Equality Report for 2010/11 and Consultation on Equality Duty Objectives for 2012/13**

### **Response**

The Law Society welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Legal Services Board's (LSB's) Equality Report and Proposed Equality Duty Objectives for 2012/13.

We agree with the proposed equality objectives put forward by the LSB and believe that the scope of the objectives reflects the LSB's forthcoming workplan.

In relation to the objective to encourage a more diverse workforce across the legal sector across all levels, we agree with this objective and this was emphasised in [our response](#) to the LSB's consultation on 'Increasing diversity and social mobility in the legal workforce' in 2011. We believe a diverse and inclusive legal profession benefits everyone. It maximises opportunities to develop and recruit the best talent and helps the profession to understand and meet the needs of its clients.

The Law Society's commitment is demonstrated, for example, through the Law Society Diversity and Inclusion Charter which is the flagship diversity initiative of the legal profession, and which currently has 210 firms signed up to it, covering 33% all solicitors in private practice (Law Society Diversity and Inclusion Charter Annual Report 2011).

We consider that the main responsibility for devising implementation plans rests on the approved regulators and that the LSB should adopt no more than a light touch supervisory approach to the work of the approved regulators.

Finally, whilst the Law Society agrees that firms should be required to conduct surveys about the diversity of their workforce as a regulatory obligation, we remain opposed to the requirement that diversity data is to be published at firm/entity level. In our previous response to the LSB we put forward the view that firms should not be required to publish individual data sets, but that approved regulators should publish subsets of information on sectors i.e. commercial law, sole practitioners, in-house lawyers, corporate, in-house lawyers etc. We remain disappointed that this option does not seem to have been adequately considered. We anticipate that as a result of the requirement to publish, much less information will be obtained since individuals will be under no obligation to respond.